

Message Text

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53

ACTION SCS-03

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 L-03 H-03 INR-10 CIAE-00 NSAE-00

SCA-01 /031 W

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P 231230Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5801

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, MA

SUBJ: W/W REPPAS

FOR: SCS

1. REPPAS SENTENCED TO THREE YEARS IMPRISONMENT AND 75 MILLION FMG FINE (ABOUT \$355 THOUSAND), WITH NO SUSPENDED SENTENCE OR PROBATION. PRESIDING JUDGE OF CORRECTIONAL COURT TOOK THREE AND HALF HOURS TO READ DECISION. FIVE OF FOURTEEN CHARGES WERE DROPPED DUE TO STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS. REPPAS CONVICTED OF MAIN CHARGE OF "SWINDLING THE STATE". ALONG EVIDENCE CITED WAS BRIBE WHICH JUDGE SAID HAD BEEN PAID TO ANDRE RESAMPA, AND LETTERS WRITTEN TO REPPAS BY FORMER AGM EMPLOYEE AMCIT DONALD KOPLIN.

2. PLAYING TO OBVIOUSLY DELIGHTED COURTROOM CROWDS, PRESIDING JUDGE READ FRENCH TRANSLATION OF NEWSWEEK ARTICLE CRITICIZING GOMR HANDLING OF CASE. THIS HE FELT WAS ADDITIONAL REASON FOR IMPRISONMENT, ALONG WITH LETTERS WRITTEN BY REPPAS' FRIENDS TO HEAD OF GOVT RAMANANTSOA. MALAGASY STATE HAD BEEN DEFAMED, HE CLAIMED.

3. CONSOFF SPOKE IMMEDIATELY AFTER ANNOUNCEMENT OF VERDICT WITH REPPAS' LAWYER RAVONY WHO STATED THAT HE WAS NOT INCLINED TO APPEAL. RAVONY FELT THAT, GIVEN CURRENT ATMOSPHERE CONCERNING CASE AND LIKELIHOOD OF EVEN LONGER SENTENCE BY COURT OF APPE-
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ALS, MOVE WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. ANY APPEAL MUST BE MADE

WITHIN 10 DAYS. FYI: INITIAL REACTION OF LAWYER AGAINST APPEAL
COULD CHANGE ON REFLECTION. END FYI.

4. REPPAS APPEARED SHOCKED AT SEVERITY OF SENTENCE. CONSOFF
WAS UNABLE TO SPEAK TO HIM AFTER TRIAL BUT WILL MAKE USUAL
CONSULAR VISIT ON NOV 27.
MENDENHALL

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Message Attributes

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